

CASE OF ABNORMAL CHOREA WITH COPROLALIA.¹

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This is, I believe, the second case of this rare disease reported in this country. The first was presented to this Society by our President, Dr. C. L. Dana, a little over a year ago, under the title of "Convulsive Tic with Explosive Disturbances of Speech."² Echolalia, present in many of the cases of Charcot and his pupils, was wanting in this case.

Geo. F. K., aged 13, seen at the Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital February 25th, 1887. Was a healthy baby; no convulsions. Parents healthy. Is one of ten children; one died at birth, another (a boy) died of "water on the brain" at age of 18 months. A sister (aged 36 years) has been epileptic from 8th year.

Five years ago, developed general common chorea. This was soon aggravated, and for weeks the patient had paroxysms of running and shouting. No better particulars can be had. Ever since he has had more or less jerky chorea, at times better, at others worse. Last autumn, began to ejaculate obscene words or short phrases, with jerks of limbs. This "coprolalia" has continued until a few days ago.

The movements (abnormal chorea or convulsive tic) consist in sudden electric jerks of parts, such as shoulders, arms, or neck (bowing movements), occasionally snuffles or snorts. Some movements are apparently in abdominal muscles and diaphragm, though inspiratory spasm is very rare. The legs seldom jerk. The movements are present on both sides, occurring sometimes on one side, sometimes on both sides. Facial muscles occasionally jerk. Each movement is almost lightning-like, and very suggestive of a cortical discharge.

The ejaculations have been equally sudden, loud, and perfectly uncontrollable. They issue simultaneously with a muscular jerk. Bad or obscene single words, or short sentences of two or three words are uttered. As examples, we may cite: "Mother's dead," "Theresa has a fit" (referring to epileptic sister who may not be having a fit), "damn it," "sh——t," etc. In the last three months, dating from a few days before first examination, he has said no formed words, but

¹ Read at the New York Neurological Society meeting of June 7th, 1887.

² Vide this JOURNAL, 1886, p. 407.

only a loud "hein" or "hah" sound, uttered mostly in the throat, mouth rarely open. Patient has been greatly mortified by these utterances, and ardently desires relief.

Examination. Choreic movements, with grunting sound as above. Pale, fairly well-grown boy. Both cranium and palate well-formed. No cardiac lesion. Is very intelligent and speaks well. No paresis or anaesthesia. Patellar jerk very feeble on both sides.

The treatment has consisted so far in the use of solution of chloro-phosphide of arsenic, gtt. iij., gradually increased to gtt. xij. *ter die*. Valerian given freely without effect. Since March 14th, has taken from 2 to 4 tablets of $\frac{1}{100}$ grain of crystallized hyoscyamia a day with very decided relief. Almost quiet for hours at a time. In the last two weeks no medicine. The boy is worse to-night (more jerking and louder throat sound) than I have ever seen him.

I would suggest that if we are to regard the common muscular movements in this case as due to cortical discharges from the motor centres for the various muscular groups affected, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the ejaculations of formed words represent discharges from Broca's speech centre in the caudal end of the left third frontal gyrus, while the inarticulate laryngeal and pharyngeal sounds are due to discharges from the centre for laryngeal movements in the caudal end of the *right* third frontal gyrus.